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## **MAKING THE CASE:**

### **A FACT SHEET ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN OUT-OF-SCHOOL TIME**

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#### **National Institute on Out-of-School Time**

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#### **Children and youth today**

There are approximately 49 million children and youth, ages 6-17, living in the U.S. [1].

The racial and ethnic diversity of America's children and youth (under 18) continues to grow. According to 2000 Census data, 68.6% were white, 17% reported Hispanic ethnic origin, 15.1% were black or African American, 7.6% indicated "other", 4% chose two or more races, 3% were Asian, and 1% were American Indian [2].

Twelve million U.S. children live in families with incomes below the federal poverty level of \$18,400 for a family of four. Double this income is the amount most families need to afford the basic necessities, such as adequate food, steady housing, and healthcare. Twenty-seven million U.S. children, or 40% of all children, are in families that cannot attain these vital requirements [3].

In 67.8% of married-couple families with children ages 6 to 17, both parents work outside the home; in single-parent families 77.8% of female-headed families, and 83.7% of male-headed families, the custodial parent works outside the home. As a consequence, research on school-age children (those between the ages of 5 and 12) show that an estimated 4 million regularly spend time without adult supervision [4, 5].

#### **Health and well-being**

Data from the National Center for Health Statistics shows that the number of overweight children between the ages of 6 and 19 continues to increase. According to 2002 data, 16% of children within this age group are considered overweight; three times what this proportion was in 1980. [6, 7]. Only two percent of children within this age group meet the recommended minimum

number of daily servings from all five food groups [8]. As a result of being overweight, these children and youth are at an increased risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, elevated blood pressure, and low self-esteem [9-11].

Rates of participation in physical activity have declined in the past 30 years for both children and youth. Baker et al. [12] reported that between the ages of 6 and 18, boys decrease participation in physical activities by 24%, while girls decrease participation by 36% between these same ages.

Opportunities for recess and physical education are disappearing from urban schools and fewer than one-in-three teens get an adequate amount of regular physical activity [13].

2002 saw both serious and juvenile crime rates drop nationwide to levels not seen in a generation [14]. Despite this overall decrease, juvenile crime rates for females have been steadily rising [15]. Between 1993 and 2002, arrests of juvenile females increased more than the arrests of their male peers in most offense categories [16].

Ten percent of all school-age children in the U.S. are eligible for special education because of disabilities. This number more than triples in the Juvenile Justice System, showing that almost 40% of all youth in the system suffer from a disability [17].

#### **Children and youth spend time after school in a variety of ways**

Forty-four percent of families do not have any regular afterschool care for their children [18]. According to the America After 3 PM report, of the children who are

reportedly in self-care, 11% are in 1<sup>st</sup> through 5<sup>th</sup> grade, 34% are in 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, and 51% are in 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade. This same report also shows that African American and Hispanic youth spend more time unsupervised than other ethnic groups [19].

A study by Public Agenda showed that nearly 36% of kids report that they spend time home alone after school at least once a week. Sixteen percent spend at least three to four days a week alone and 13% spend five days a week alone at home after school. This same study reported that 57% of middle and high school students participate in some organized activity every day, or almost every day, after school. When surveyed, 85% of students say that kids who participate in organized activities during the afterschool hours are better off than those who do not [20].

About one-third of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, one-fourth of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and one-fifth of 12<sup>th</sup> graders watched four or more hours of television on weekdays in 2000 [21]. Researchers have associated watching violence on TV with an increased likelihood that children and teens will display physically aggressive behaviors, exhibit relational aggression (behaviors that harm others through damage or threat of damage to relationships, feelings, friendship, or group inclusion), and assume the worst in their interactions with others [22, 23].

More than half of teens say they would not watch so much TV or play video games if they had other things to do after school [24]. Fifty-four percent of teens say that there is not much for them to do after school other than hang out. Public Agenda reported that one-in-three students say that when they do have free time to do whatever they choose, this time usually ends up being wasted [20].

A poll conducted by Junior Achievement of 1,142 youth between the ages of 8 and 18 indicated that one-in-five youth are not interested in the types of programming offered at afterschool programs. Such research indicates that there is not enough variety in programs to attract and retain youth participation. Youth who were surveyed reported that they would be more interested in attending programs that provided activities in the arts, spending time with mentors, and learning about careers and sports [25].

The Girls Scouts surveyed teenage girls regarding their interests in afterschool activities. The top choice for girls between the ages of 11 and 17 was programs that build self-confidence, followed by programs focused on

career opportunities, and programs that work on problem solving skills [26].

Anderson-Butcher et al. reported that in a sample of 150 youth attending Boys and Girls Clubs of America, friendships were a major consideration when deciding whether or not to attend an afterschool program [27].

Thirty percent of parents who do not have their children currently enrolled in an afterschool program report that they would if one were available [19]. However, according to Public Agenda, of those parents who have enrolled their children in afterschool activities, low-income parents and those who are members of racial and ethnic minorities are less satisfied with their children's afterschool activity options than are wealthier and white parents [20].

When asked what they desire from afterschool programming, parent reactions are mixed: 54% of parents feel that children need a break from academics during the afterschool hours while 38% of parents feel that children need afterschool programs that are focused on academic skills [20].

In a survey of 94 cities conducted by the U.S. Conference of Mayors [28], city leaders indicated that afterschool program capacity is growing but only about 35% of children needing afterschool care are actually enrolled in programs. America After 3 PM recently reported that only 11% of the nation's K-12 children and youth are participating in afterschool programs [19].

## **Children and youth benefit from participation in afterschool programming**

Lack of adult supervision and participation in self-care for both children and adolescents have been linked to: increased likelihood of accidents, injuries, lower social competence, lower GPAs, lower achievement test scores, and greater likelihood of participation in delinquent or other high risk activities such as experimentation with alcohol, tobacco, drugs and sex [29-32]. Teens who are unsupervised during afterschool hours are 37% more likely to become teen parents [33].

Halpern reported that afterschool programs fill gaps in communities; they complement the institutions of family and school by providing opportunities and resources that these other institutions are unable to

provide. This is especially true for low- and moderate-income children. Afterschool programs provide an environment that supports the social and interpersonal dimensions of a child's development by responding to the interests and concerns of participants [34]. According to Walker and Arbreton, it is important to provide children and youth with environments like this which cultivate social relationships and provide opportunities for participants to "hang out" during the non-school hours [35].

In a two-year study examining literacy goals and practices in afterschool programs in three cities, Halpern [36] concluded that programs that were exemplary in strengthening literacy were intentional about planning to integrate literacy activities into program life; created a rich literacy environment with book displays and dedicated areas for reading and writing; purposefully integrated literacy into other program activities; and strengthen children's motivation for reading and writing.

There is growing evidence that quality out-of-school opportunities matter – that they complement environments created by schools and families and provide important "nutrients" that deter failure and promote success – and that they matter in ways that are observable and measurable [37].

Go Grrrls in Tucson, Arizona is an afterschool intervention program focusing on promotion of middle school girls' positive psychosocial development. In a random assignment evaluation, the intervention group reported significantly greater increases in body image, assertiveness, positive attitudes regarding attractiveness, self-efficacy, self-liking, and competence [38].

The Afterschool Alliance reports that afterschool programs are a successful way of helping prevent teen pregnancy. These programs often encourage good decision-making, offer youth health education, and provide youth with positive role models in a supervised setting during the afterschool hours. Pregnancy prevention programs encourage youth to make good decisions and aim to raise youth awareness about the risks of sexual involvement through education and discussions regarding their health [39].

Recent research by Gambone, Klem, and Connell [40] identified two crucial elements to what matters most in helping youth reach healthy adult outcomes – the achievement of developmental outcomes such as learning to be productive; to connect with adults and

peers; to navigate through diverse settings – and the availability of supports and opportunities such as supportive relationships with adults and peers; challenging activities and learning experiences; and meaningful opportunities for involvement and membership.

Afterschool programs can increase engagement in learning by providing middle school students with opportunities to meet needs that schools often can't, e.g., personal attention from adults, a positive peer group, and activities that hold their interest and build their self-esteem (Vandell, et al., 1996; Garnezy, 1991; Rutter, 1987; Clark, 1987; Masten, et al., 1990; Comer, et al., 1984; Werner, 1993; Halpern, 1992; As reported in Miller, 2003) [41].

Afterschool programs can offer intangibles such as – the opportunity to engage in activities that help young people realize they have something to contribute to the group; the opportunity to work with diverse peers and adults to create projects, performances and presentations that receive accolades from their families and the larger community; and the opportunity to develop a vision of life's possibilities that, with commitment and persistence, are attainable [41].

In New York City, afterschool programs started by Boys and Girls Clubs in selected public housing developments saw significant drops in drug use, presence of crack cocaine, and police reports of drug activity. Drug activity decreased 22%, juvenile arrests dropped 13%, and vandalism in the public housing developments decreased 12.5%. At the same time, parental involvement increased, compared to public housing developments not selected to implement the afterschool programs [42].

In a meta-analysis of 56 studies of out-of-school time programs researchers at McREL found that out-of-school time strategies can have positive effects on the achievement of low-achieving or at-risk students in reading and mathematics; that the timeframes for delivering OST programs (i.e., after school or summer) do not influence their effectiveness; and that OST strategies need not focus solely on academic activities to have positive effects on student achievement [43].

Adolescent mental and emotional well-being is associated with teens' environments. Links have been found consistently between teens' well-being and environments that are emotionally positive and warm and that provide support for developing adolescent

autonomy. Some research suggests that positive experiences in one area (for example, in the family, among peers, at school, through youth community service...) may lessen the effect of negative experiences in other areas. Adolescents who spend time in communities that are rich in developmental opportunities for them experience less risk and show evidence of higher rates of positive development [44, 45].

Halpern argues that non-school hour programs such as afterschool programs have the potential for increasing the physical activity of program participants [13]. The Harvard Family Research Project has profiled several evaluations of afterschool programs focused on increasing the physical activity levels of children and youth. These evaluation results showed that the afterschool programs did increase levels of physical activity in participants [46, 47].

## **The growing need for 21<sup>st</sup> century skills**

There remains a profound gap between the knowledge and skills most students learn in school and the knowledge and skills they need in typical 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Students need to learn academic content through real-world examples, applications, and experiences both inside and outside of school [48].

Afterschool programs can serve as an entry-point for many children and youth to both develop 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and expand their exposure to and increase their ability to navigate new forms of technology [49]. Kugler [50] notes that after-school computer clubs are often the most popular after-school activities and can serve as an entry point to other academic learning experiences. Other research suggests that applications focused on multimedia projects, which are often highly attractive to teens, can lead to success in high-order thinking, problem solving, and synthesizing different points of view [51].

Youth tend to be more engaged in technology-oriented programs when they are given choices in activities, when program staff provide technological support, and when they are given opportunities for reflection, discussion, and interaction [52]. In general, teens are more attracted to program approaches that attempt to infuse technology into all program activities rather than having a “technology component” in the program which focuses primarily on teaching technology skills [53].

## **The out-of-school time workforce**

According to a survey conducted by AED Center for Youth Development and Policy Research and the National Institute on Out-of-School Time, the out-of-school workforce lacks a clear professional identity. When questioned about their job title, 207 different titles were reported by 350 respondents. Direct line staff alone reported approximately 20 job titles including: child care worker, instructor/teacher, youth worker/leader, and recreation specialists. Furthermore, an overwhelming majority (97 %) of OST staff believe that working in the OST field is a profession. However, only 38% think that people outside of this field view it as a profession [54].

The out-of-school time field lacks a national professional development system. However, several statewide initiatives are in pursuit of building components for a statewide system. Alaska, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Michigan, and New York are at various stages of developing core competencies, career lattices, and school-age credentials. Indiana has launched a combined school-age and youth development credential and Massachusetts has created a set of core competencies and is in the process of developing a career lattice. Local efforts are also underway in Baltimore, Chicago, Kansas City, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and Washington, DC [55].

Respondents to the 2001 National Career Development Survey of early childhood/school-age staff reported that stipends, wage supplement programs, scholarships, and loan forgiveness programs were among their preferred strategies to combating staff turnover [56].

In a national survey of afterschool programs (n= 273), California Tomorrow found that 56% of responding programs enroll youth from more than one language group, and one-in-four serve English Language Learners (ELL). Very few program directors reported having enough bilingual staff to work with these youth in their home languages, and even fewer have staff that are trained to effectively serve youth who speak little English. Half the programs that enroll a significant number of English learners do not have any staff who speak the home languages of the participants and their families [57].



## Economic costs and benefits

Most families pay, an average of \$22 per week, per child for afterschool programs [19]. Findings from the MOST Initiative evaluation estimated that a full year program costs approximately \$4,000 per child. Costs drop to \$3,000 when space and utilities are donated. Administrative time and other in-kind donations are excluded from these estimates [58].

A recent report calculates the potential national cost of ensuring developmental opportunities and supports for school-age youth ages 6-17 would be \$144 billion annually. That is a cost of \$2.55 per hour or \$3,060 annually per youth. The resulting return on every dollar invested is a gain of \$10.51 [59].

A study by the Rose Institute pertaining to California's proposition 49 concludes that afterschool programs in California are cost-effective. The study indicates that the return to taxpayers ranges from \$2.99 to \$4.03 for every dollar spent on afterschool programs. The benefit to students attending afterschool programs ranges from \$2.29 to \$3.04 for every dollar spent on afterschool programs. Expenditures produce benefits in the areas of reduced child care costs, improved school performance, increased compensation, reduced crime costs, and reduced welfare costs [60].

## Public support continues to grow

In a random survey of 1,178 police chiefs, sheriffs, and prosecutors, respondents were asked to rank the impact of several strategies to reduce youth violence and crime. By more than a four-to-one margin, respondents chose providing afterschool programs for school-age youngsters and more educational child care programs for preschool children rather than hiring more police officers as having the greatest impact in reducing youth violence and crime [61].

Public polling shows strong evidence of public support for afterschool programs. Across all demographic and party lines, Americans see afterschool as a necessity. Voters say afterschool programs are key to keeping students out of trouble, and they want governments at all levels to provide more funds for these programs [62].

A post-election poll conducted for the Afterschool Alliance showed that eight-in-ten voters agree that elected public officials should increase funding for afterschool programs. Seventy-six percent said that

they would even support a tax increase if it meant increased funding for such programs [63].

The presence of afterschool programs in public schools has risen. In 2001, 67% of principals reported that their schools offer optional afterschool programs and 60% reported that their programs began within the past five years [64].

In 2004, both the House and the Senate passed resolutions declaring October 14<sup>th</sup> "Lights on Afterschool Day"; the first time Congress has passed resolutions in support of this event. This year, more than 7,000 events took place across the country in honor of LOA, making it the largest rally yet [65].

## Trends in public funding

Federal funding for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) program began at \$750,000 in 1995. The FY 2005 budget provides \$999.1 million for the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC afterschool initiative, a number that reflects the across-the-board 0.8% cut that was imposed on all education programs [66]. In 2004, 1.4 million children and youth were attending programs in approximately 6,800 schools in 1,597 communities across the country [67, 68]. Today, the 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC program is administered by the states and the U.S. Department of Education has commissioned a searchable database which is projected for completion by the summer of 2005 which will track the numbers of young people served by community/state (J. Shortt, personal communication with U.S. Department of Education, January 7, 2005).

The Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) represents a significant public investment -- \$4.8 billion in federal dollars and an estimated \$2.2 billion in state funds in fiscal year 2004. In addition to these figures, many states are transferring significant amounts of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to CCDF, and are directly spending TANF on afterschool programs and child care [69].

In fiscal year 2001, 36% of 1.8 million children receiving CCDF subsidies were school-age. Another 10% were kindergarten age. For school-age children receiving subsidies, half were in center-based programs, a third was in family child care homes, and 13% were in the child's own home [70].

Despite increased funding, disparities in access and quality still persist. Programs in affluent or middle

class neighborhoods are more likely to include direct instruction in the arts, enrichment activities, and sports, and are more likely to provide snacks or meals than are programs in poorer neighborhoods. Wealthier communities are also more likely to have computer labs, playing fields and gyms, open enrollment slots, and resources for art and enrichment materials. Programs in low-income areas have much tighter budgets, more facilities in need of repair, longer wait lists to get into the program, and higher staff-to-youth ratios [57].

## Strengthening the field

Proscio and Whiting note that the explosion of before- and afterschool programs across the country is a verification of the growing demand for these types of supervised environments for children and youth among working parents, educators, child-welfare advocates and public officials. However, according to Proscio and Whiting, there are few well-established, coherent city-wide systems to support these programs on a funding, promotion, or regulatory basis. At least four cities (San Diego, Los Angeles, New York and Chicago) have laid the groundwork for a deliberate, organized system of out-of-school time programs and each of the four emerging systems are now more routine, better supported, and more important to the local community that they have been in the past [71].

The delivery of program activities and opportunities to high school-age youth during out-of-school time would be enhanced by a systemic approach with infrastructure elements, such as (a) funding collaborations; (b) planning and cooperation among stakeholders; (c) formal linkages between high schools, community, and local government organizations; (d) high school-age program standards; (e) an agreed upon set of objectives; and (f) designated citywide leadership [72].

Available evidence suggests that the best program and policy ideas are unlikely to be effective if they do not include proper staff training, a well-developed infrastructure, and buy-in from parents and teens, including involving teens in program development [73].

Researchers at the Harvard Family Research Project suggest that programs take into consideration several factors such as programming goals, youth needs, age of participants, and level of participant interest when determining the program's participation requirements. Youth have a variety of demands on their time,

especially as they grow older, and may need increasing flexibility in program participation requirements [74].

The National School Board Association published a report on the value of afterschool programs developing connections with local school boards. A profile of eight school districts indicated that these connections can be very effective. In order for these connections to be as successful as possible, the NSBA recommends that school districts do the following: 1) conduct a needs assessment to find out the needs of the local community; 2) make a commitment to provide long-term programming to children and youth; 3) decide what can realistically be provided; 4) open up to community partnerships; 5) concentrate on quality programming; 6) connect with participants' parents; 7) evaluate and fine-tune plans; and 9) keep moving forward [75].

Programs that offer staff at all levels access to comprehensive training and educational opportunities: (1) enable them to strengthen their skills; (2) develop their knowledge base; and (3) advance along their chosen career path. Many innovative training and professional development initiatives exist. What communities, cities, and states need is an infrastructure that builds on and weaves together these often disparate efforts by creating a coherent system of support for out-of-school time professionals while improving services to young people [76].

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